Supporting Alabama Farms and Farmers

These are the projects Congressman Bright requested through the subcommittee on Agriculture.

AGRICULTURE

Cogongrass Invasive Species Research Project

$2,000,000

Auburn University

202 Samford Hall

Auburn, AL 36849

This project will fund research performed by Auburn scientists in collaboration with federal and state agencies that will develop solutions to the cogongrass crisis confronting Alabama and the southeastern United States. Significant gaps currently exist in early detection rapid response strategies, mapping, eradication technologies, and ecosystem restoration. This project will provide an economic analysis of the current impact of cogongrass in Alabama, economic analyses for differing management and eradication and restoration strategies, evaluation of hyper spectral imaging for early detection and mapping of cogongrass, and an evaluation of cogongrass awareness and perceptions on the local, regional and state levels.

Cogongrass is a federal noxious weed. It is rapidly expanding throughout the Southeastern United States. Other Southern States including Georgia and South Carolina are currently working to eradicate cogongrass to prevent its continued spread. Alabama was the initial introduction point for cogongrass almost 100 years ago and the state needs to more comprehensively address the problem to prevent future spread from Alabama throughout the Southeast. This project is a wise use of taxpayer dollars because the 2nd District is at the frontlines of the cogongrass invasion and research will aid in the fight against the spread of cogongrass and could save taxpayers money in the long term.

Research Center on Detection and Food Safety

$2,500,000

Auburn University

202 Samford Hall

Auburn, AL 36849

This project seeks to improve the safety of the U.S. food system by developing the science and engineering required to rapidly identify, pinpoint, and characterize problems that arise in the food supply chain through an integration of sensor and information technology,. The project will educate a new generation of engineers and scientists on new ways to address complex issues in the food industry.. The project will deliver new technologies for real-time contamination detection and information technologies for traceability and inventory control.

In June 2008, a salmonella outbreak associated with contaminated tomatoes in 29 states resulted in an economic loss of more than $100 million. The cost of this outbreak to Alabama farmers was estimated to be over $10 million, even though no contaminated products were found to have come from Alabama. The recent salmonella contamination in peanut butter only increases the importance of this type of research to the 2nd District. This project is a wise use of taxpayer dollars because it will help secure the food supply, protecting the farmers who grow crops in the 2nd district and the consumers who use these products.

Tri-State Joint Peanut Research Project

$591,000

Auburn University

202 Samford Hall

Auburn, AL 36849

The economies of Alabama, Georgia and Florida, and the survival of communities in this region are dependent on economical row crop production, primarily for peanuts and cotton. Unfortunately, continuous cropping of these more productive crops coupled with intensive tillage practices have resulted in compacted soils, reduced water infiltration, and increased soil erosion. These conditions have reduced yields to the point where profitability of the crops are unreliable. The objective of this on-going tri-state research effort is to demonstrate the economical advantages of crop rotations and conservation tillage and the profitability associated with well managed cropping systems that are integrated with grazing systems. This project is a wise use of taxpayer dollars because peanuts are a prominent crop in the 2nd District and research thus far shows that integration of winter-annual grazing and perennial pastures with peanuts and cotton results in more income per acre than with row crops alone. Given the 3.25 million acres of cotton and 925,000 acres of peanuts being grown in the Southeast (Georgia, Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia), livestock and conservation cropping could mean billions of dollars for the region's rural economy.